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Retired General: CIA Is Nearly Paralyzed

By Michael Holmes

Congressional investigations of the American intelligence community "have practically paralyzed the CIA," a former deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said Saturday.

Retired Lt. Gen. Alva R. Fitch said: "Virtually no one in intelligence does anything now because they don't know that tomorrow they might be questioned about it," he said.

Acknowledging that "the intelligence community, like other institutions, has some internal problems and occasional policy errors," Fitch said the present investigations "are raising a moralistic fuss about things that were approved (by

the government) at the time they occurred."

Partly because of the Watergate scandals, he said, "there's a different morality now. But the investigations have passed the point where they're doing good for the country. I think they're doing us a great disservice."

Fitch said that certain practices which have come under fire, such as monitoring phone calls, opening mail and keeping dossiers on U.S. citizens, are important.

Fitch, who for 2½ years directed Army intelligence activities, said that when intelligence agencies are denied the controversial methods, "if a man wants to sell out to a foreign government, he feels

much more secure."

He also lashed out at critics who have accused the intelligence agencies of formulating "assassination plots."

"I know the people and I know why they did things," he said. "I know of no single case where there was an assassination plot. There's a great difference between a plot and a contingency plan."

"When you plan how to get students out of a high school in case of fire," he said, "that is a contingency plan — it's not a plot to set the school on fire."

Fitch, in Kearney, Neb., for a 50-year high school reunion, told The World-Herald in a phone interview that the need for a strong intelligence oper-

ation is "just as great as it ever was."

Fitch, a native of Amherst, Neb., was held prisoner by the Japanese in World War II. He began his career in Army intelligence in 1947, retiring from the service in 1966.